

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MURKOWSKI. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senator LAUTENBERG and Senator ASHCROFT.

It is my understanding that tomorrow the two sides will have 1 hour equally divided. Sometimes we start a little late around here, in spite of our efforts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I think I heard the Senator from Alaska say 10 minutes for each of us who were going to speak in morning business. I ask unanimous consent that up to 15 minutes be allocated to me.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GUN SAFETY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, on April 20, we are going to mark a 1-year anniversary of the terrible tragedy that occurred at Columbine High School in Colorado. That was the day when two teenagers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, walked into the school and sprayed the library and cafeteria with gunfire, killing 12 classmates and a teacher and wounding many others. A few who were aware of what took place that day will never forget that horrible scene of a young man jumping out a window, people running, weeping, the whole place in disarray, students lying on the ground wounded, some fatally.

You would have thought by now, 9 months after that massacre, that Congress would have been able to get together to pass commonsense gun safety measures. Some of my colleagues will say there is not much we can do about it.

No, we cannot go back and undo that tragedy, but we sure can do something that maybe will prevent something similar from happening in the future. It is preposterous to say we can't do anything better. We can do a lot about it. Reasonable gun safety legislation can make a difference.

For proof, I ask that we take a look at testimony of the young woman, Robyn Anderson, before the Judiciary Committee of the Colorado House of Representatives. In case the name isn't familiar, Robyn Anderson is the young woman who went with Harris and Klebold to the Tanner gun show in Adams County, CO. It was in late 1998. She wanted to help them buy guns.

Harris and Klebold were too young to buy guns because they had an 18-year age limit, but Robyn Anderson was 18. She bought three guns at that gun show, two shotguns, and a rifle, and immediately handed them over to Har-

ris and Klebold. Four months later, Harris and Klebold used all three of those guns in their murderous rampage.

This is what Ms. Anderson said during her testimony:

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold had gone to the Tanner gun show on Saturday and they took me back with them on Sunday. . . . While we were walking around, Eric and Dylan kept asking sellers if they were private or licensed. They wanted to buy their guns from someone who was private—and not licensed—because there would be no paperwork or background check.

That was her statement to the committee in the Colorado House. As all can see, they had one mission: to avoid a background check.

I am the author of a piece of legislation we tried to get through the Senate that said we ought to have everybody available for a background check. We know those unlicensed dealers who were able to sell at these gun shows—and there are over 4,000 gun shows a year—unless a State law says no, can sell guns to anybody who has the money. They can put them in the back of their car. They can carry them on their shoulder. Even someone who is listed on the 10 Most Wanted—criminals—could qualify to buy a gun from one of these dealers.

Tragically, these three young people found three gun dealers, and they bought their deadly weapons. This is what she had to say about gun sales at gun shows:

It was too easy. I wish it had been more difficult. I wouldn't have helped them buy the guns if I had faced a background check.

Robyn Anderson said that in front of the Colorado legislature. This shows clearly that background checks for gun sales can make a difference. They can keep guns out of the wrong hands.

When the National Rifle Association says that our gun laws are sufficient, it is wrong. They are simply out of line. There is a glaring loophole—the gun show loophole—which Congress must close.

There is no more time for delay. The American people are requesting action, demanding it, if you look at surveys. I hope my colleagues will complete action on the juvenile justice bill because it did contain a prohibition on gun sales that are done at gun shows without a background check. Now, that was knocked out of the House bill as it came over to the Senate for conference. But the fact is that it was in the Senate bill, and we ought to include it in any bill that finally passes. Let's do it before we mark the anniversary of that terrible day at Columbine High School, showing that we are serious and that we care about what happened.

In the nine months since April 20, we have seen more terrible shootings and bloodshed. In May of last year, a teenager in Conyers, GA, shot and injured six of his classmates. In July, a gunman in Ohio shot three teenage girls and the teacher of a Bible study group. In August, a white supremacist

stormed into a Jewish community center near Los Angeles and shot two children and a senior citizen. Later that day, before this culprit was apprehended, he shot and killed a postal worker. In September, more gun violence—a gunman in Fort Worth, TX, walked into a Baptist church and killed seven young people who were there for a prayer meeting before shooting himself. In November, the worst mass shooting in Hawaii's history—a Xerox employee killed seven coworkers. Yet another school shooting in December—a seventh grader in Fort Gibson, OK, takes his father's gun to school and wounds four classmates.

That is what we see. It doesn't matter what the heritage is of the individuals; race or religion doesn't matter. Everybody is subject to this kind of violence if they are in the wrong place at the wrong time. These are just the shootings that got the most attention. Month after month, the death toll from gun violence continues to mount. From Colorado to Georgia, from Ohio to California, from Texas to Hawaii, families across this country continue to mourn.

What do we do here in Congress about it? Nothing. It is a disgrace.

Of course, the Senate did pass several reasonable measures as part of the Juvenile Justice bill, including the amendment I mentioned before, which would prevent criminals from being able to buy guns at gun shows.

Technically, this legislation is stuck in a conference committee. For those who are not part of the structure here, the conference committee is where legislation is finally resolved when the House committee and the Senate committee, with similar jurisdiction, meet together and argue out the differences, if any, in a bill. But it would be more accurate to say that it is being held hostage by the extremists at the NRA and the politicians who march lockstep to their commands.

We have to free this legislation, and we dare not let the gun lobby prevail over the vast majority and the will of the American people who simply want to make their families a little safer.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in pushing the congressional leadership to finish work on the juvenile justice bill. We want to do it before there is another episode of gun violence, another loss of life that could be avoided. We have to do more to stop the gun violence, the epidemic that lies within our country. I hope we will be able to do it soon.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

REMEMBERING DERRICK THOMAS

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that I come to the floor today. Just a few days ago, on February 1, I came here to talk about a professional football achievement, congratulating the St. Louis Rams on their Super Bowl victory. It was a tremendous victory.